



United Way
for Southeastern Michigan

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**Testimony to the House Committee on Families and Children's Services
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HB 5242 – Training Requirements for Enrolled Providers

Provided by:

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I would like to begin by thanking the Committee Chair, Representative Valentine, and the rest of the Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony before you today.

The mission of United Way for Southeastern Michigan is to mobilize the caring power of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan to improve communities and individual lives in measurable and lasting ways. The United Way for Southeastern Michigan is committed to making lasting change in community conditions in three broad issue areas, including meeting basic needs, increasing financial stability, and improving education outcomes. More specifically for this purpose, UWSEM is working to make sure that every child is prepared to enter school ready to learn and has access to quality child care.

To address the needs this outcome, UWSEM created Early Learning Communities. The Early Learning Communities provide free training and resources to parents and caregivers who care for children ages 0-5. We know that this population has the most influence on children in the formative years of life, yet many informal caregivers -- like family members, friends and neighbors -- lack the knowledge to provide proper developmental support so that children enter Kindergarten prepared. Without that support, children fall behind before they start.

Why Child Development Curriculum is important for Michigan's Children:

On average, children in poverty will hear 30 million fewer words by the age of 3 than a child in a middle-income home. What's more, 90 percent of the brain's connections are made during this time. Words and utterances, positive and engaging, are the drivers of brain activity that contributes to reading success and language development, which is the driver of improved academic and social outcomes across the spectrum. By the time a child from a non-communicative home environment enters kindergarten; his or her vocabulary may be the equivalent of a two year old, compared to peers from literacy-rich homes with a vocabulary of a ten-year-old, an astonishing eight-year gap that is rarely ever closed.

There are 280,000 thousand children aged 0-5 in Southeastern Michigan, 70,000 of whom live in poverty. While there are federal funding opportunities to improve the quality of care in pre-school settings, Michigan is unique in that 83 percent of its subsidized care funds go directly to unlicensed, unregulated caregivers who are family, friends, and neighbors. In other words, the majority of children in poverty in our region don't attend licensed or regulated child care centers.

UWSEM's Recommendations - HB5242 – Training Requirements for Enrolled Providers

UWSEM supports the substitute language, but with amendments. UWSEM would like to see changes made to the bill that reflect the importance of Child Development curriculum for enrolled providers. UWSEM would like to the bill language to include the following:

- Require all enrolled providers to complete *at least* six hours of Great Start to Quality Orientation
 - Broaden the acceptable CPR and First Aid certification courses to include alternate certification courses, such as the Red Cross course, as well as the American Heart Association course.
 - Include Child Development in the required curriculum.
 - Expand the required hours – six hours is not an adequate amount of time to provide a quality learning experience, even if it only includes the five topics currently included in the bill. Hours should also allow more time to accommodate different learning styles.
- The Department will provide an incentive payment for enrolled providers who complete an additional 10 annual clock hours of approved training.
 - The approved training should include a requirement for enrolled providers to complete the DHS approved curriculum on Child Development. DHS currently offers this as an option for approved training, however, an enrolled provider is not required to complete this specific training. Requiring completion of a Child Development curriculum will greatly influence positive educational outcomes for Michigan's children.

Thank you for your time. If you'd like to know more about United Way for Southeastern Michigan's position on this bill, please contact Rebecca Crawford, Public Policy Manager, at 313.226.9439 or Rebecca.Crawford@LiveUnitedSEM.org.